



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

extremes which you should strive to attain. It may also be said that the treatment of flowers depends a good deal upon the purpose for which they are employed. If used to decorate small objects, such as photograph-frames, or anything that will be handled or closely examined, the workmanship should be more delicate and finished, if, however, they are painted on screens or panels, or in large pictures, to be viewed at a distance, there should be less attention to detail and more regard to their general effect. Begin, however, as we have said, with faithful imitation, since generalization should follow, not precede, accurate knowledge. When this is once gained, practice will give you a style of your own.

In conclusion, let nature be the source of your inspiration and the object of your persevering study, but make use of everything that may assist you in that study—books, exhibitions of paintings, and the companionship of those interested in artistic pursuits. Cultivate a teachable disposition, a readiness to receive suggestions (not forgetting, however, the apostolic injunction to “prove all things”), and even unpalatable criticism. Set a high standard before you, aiming rather to please critics than indulgent and indiscriminating friends. Do not be easily discouraged; dissatisfaction with one’s own efforts is no evidence of want of talent, rather the reverse; the true artist must ever feel a “noble discontent” and fall short of his own ideal. But there is a degree of success to which all may attain; it is proportioned to the love of a pursuit and the diligence with which it is followed. According to Sir Joshua Reynolds: “Nothing is denied to well-directed industry.” To this there may be some limitations; but with regard to “flower painting in oils,” it is emphatically true. L. DONALDSON.

#### FRUIT-PAINTING IN OILS.

##### I.—GENERAL PRELIMINARY HINTS FOR PRACTICE.

THERE are as many different methods of painting fruit as there are in the rendering of any other subject on canvas, and each artist impresses on his work more or less of his own individuality however much he may have admired and studied the works of another. The greatest painters of fruit whose works have come under my personal notice—among the modern, I mean—are St. Jean the Frenchman, Preyer the German, Robie the Belgian, and George Lance the Englishman. I mention these four because, while each is a master of notable excellence and originality, they all differ widely in method and technique. Of the quartet I consider St. Jean by far the strongest, combining, it seems to me, more of the great qualities and exhibiting more power than any of the others.

The painting of fruit and still-life is generally considered a lower and unimportant branch of art when compared with figure and landscape painting, which doubtless is the case, inasmuch as there are less difficulties to contend with in its pursuit and not the opportunities they offer for the embodiment of sentiment and imagination. Yet those artists who have succeeded best in this branch and given to the world its most notable examples, were men of profound culture as draughtsmen and colorists—were accomplished figure-painters and landscapists, and in all probability could have made their mark in either of these latter walks.

The fruit-painter should spend much time in making close studies from nature. He should accumulate as much material of this kind as possible, both of out-door and indoor studies; for besides keeping his eye keyed up to the truth of nature and rendering his touch more skilful and assured, he has a stock of riches to draw upon in composing and painting larger pictures when the subject he desires is out of season. Besides, he should *never* rely upon his memory for the production of even a single leaf, for all the little accidents of nature which constitute the realism of any work of art, can never be imagined, nor portrayed in the absence of the original or the “study” from the original.

It is of the first importance in beginning a picture, to get the whole composition well defined in the mind before hazarding a touch upon the canvas. Many young painters, no matter how large their canvas, begin by drawing in and coloring some favorite fruit without giving a thought to the design *as a whole*, then adding something else, and so building up bit by bit, until suddenly they find themselves in “deep water” and discover too late that they have lost all unity and harmony of both line and color. At this juncture enthusiasm lapses, interest dies out, and the canvas is either set aside or

painted over and used for a new effort. “Haste makes waste,” says the proverb. If we bolt our food without thorough mastication, no wonder the digestive organs become deranged and refuse to work properly. So with the painter who will not devote sufficient time to *think* his subject out in its entirety.

Another great error and a very common one, is the habit of endeavoring to make good better, that is, when one has carried his work as far as his ability will permit, attempting to go farther because he feels that it *can be* made nearer perfect. Every touch after this is perilous. Such individuals never learn to “let well enough alone.” It is astonishing how many artists there are who never realize when they have done a good thing. I have known more than one deliberately take up a beautiful out-door study from nature and proceed in cold blood to denude it of every charm it possessed under the impression that he was improving it.

The first essential in still-life, as in all other branches of art, is correct drawing—let this be a “sine qua non.” The next is purity of color and richness of tone. In a rather important composition, where a quantity of fruit is introduced, gracefulness of form and design and a proper distribution of light and shade, demand as much consideration as they would in a figure piece.

When the design of the picture has been well thought out, take a piece of willow charcoal and proceed to block it in freely (I tint my canvas a light, warm gray, as the glaring white disturbs the eye and retards the free flow of ideas during the process of drawing; and in the after one of coloring, confuses our perceptions of truth of tone.) After the rough drawing has been completed, take a fine pointed, sable brush and with some light medium tint and a rapid dryer, carefully outline the whole, correcting any exaggeration or fault which may be detected the while. This not only serves to impress the entire work more enduringly upon the mind but gives a firm outline which will not be readily lost in the process of coloring. In the design do not forget that there must be one prominent point of interest to which all other parts of the picture must be subservient.

Now for the coloring. I should hesitate to lay down any rule as to the part of the picture which should first be painted in. Some painters begin with the background; but experience has taught me that the safest and surest way is to attack the principal points of attraction and graduate from thence to the least important. This is the more necessary as the vivid color of fresh fruit rapidly fades and gives one but a limited time at best in which to perpetuate its beauties. The painting should be done as rapidly as possible, but with precision and firmness, never losing sight of breadth and simplicity. The larger the brush you can use, the sooner and better will this result be attained. There are artists who finish their picture as they proceed, considering an after painting fatal to its brilliancy and purity. There is reason in this; but I consider the practice dangerous, inasmuch as the strongest dryer must be plentifully employed as a vehicle to enable the artist to do this, and like the daring and enthusiastic surgeon who will sometimes risk his patient’s life for the sake of displaying his skill in a difficult and dangerous operation, the artist not unfrequently finds his beautiful handiwork marred and defaced by cracking. “Haste makes waste,” as I have remarked before.

My own method is to use a dryer sparingly, and paint in all my models as broadly and simply as I can, with plenty of color (local), keeping the light portions a tone lower and the shadows a tone higher than I see them in nature. After this first painting or “laying in” (as it is called) has dried, I go over it carefully, thoughtfully—avoiding timidity, however, with the higher, purer and more brilliant colors—heightening the lights, deepening the shades and attending particularly to such important accidents of nature as specks, bruises and the many little imperfections, the representation of which greatly enhances the realistic effect of the finished picture. After this second painting very little remains to be done. In the course of a day or two I generally go over the picture with a thin coat of retouching varnish, and frequently find some retouching necessary.

Many amateurs have complained to me of the difficulty they experience by the sinking of their colors to such a degree that they cannot distinguish the tones when it becomes desirable to repaint. My practice is (if I do not use the varnish), if the part be thoroughly dry, to pass a little nut or poppy oil thinly over it and rub off with an old, well-worn, cambric handkerchief. Another difficulty young painters grievously complain of

is the unequal drying qualities of different pigments. As I have said before, I use dryers cautiously and sparingly; yet, under certain circumstances they are a necessity, notably, in the use of the lakes, vermilion, cadmium, etc. The best and most trustworthy drying vehicles, are Siccatis de Haarlem and copal en paté, which, if used properly will neither vitiate the color nor cause it to crack in after years.

My next paper will treat upon the various colors used by myself in fruit-painting. A. J. H. WAY.

## Art Notes and Hints.

It is a great pity that our farm buildings are so generally unpicturesque. Buildings, because of the number of flat tints which they contain, are the best subjects for the beginner. When one finds an old-fashioned farm-house or barn, or an old covered bridge or water-mill he should look no farther for a study.

\* \* \*

It should be borne in mind in using torchon or other paper of large grain that much more water is necessary in the large tints than would be if one were working on fine-grained paper. For this reason, dark and medium tones will have to be gone over several times. When working on Bristol board, on the contrary, the colors are used almost dry.

\* \* \*

IN framing a large number of engravings the cost of mats of white or tinted paper may be avoided, and much of their effect gained, by painting a border of the tint and the width desired on the inside of the glass with gouache mixed with a glue medium.

\* \* \*

LEATHER boiled with soft soap may be pressed in a mould and will take a fine impression without losing its distinctive grain. On drying it becomes very hard.

\* \* \*

THE best art is always that which comes nearest to nature, not necessarily in minute detail, but in sympathy and spirit.

\* \* \*

SOMETIMES it is almost as good practice as working yourself to watch a skilful workman.

\* \* \*

“THE point and the side of his lead-pencil,” says Turner, “are to the painter the next best tools to his brush.”

\* \* \*

THE use of the crayon without the stump produces bold and massive drawings with much of the quality of charcoal and more completeness. Rubbing tints, however, must be carefully avoided. Effects must be produced entirely by pure gradations of the crayon stroke itself. The drawings can be fixed in the same way as those in charcoal.

\* \* \*

THERE is no positive rule as to standing or sitting down to your work. On a small canvas the latter method is convenient enough, but in painting on a larger scale you will do best to trust to your feet. That position gives you a freedom of movement which is a decided advantage to your work.

\* \* \*

VIBERT has an interesting, if not highly inspirational, method of work. He begins a picture by making a brisk pencil sketch of it. This he supplements by some studies of detail, following them with a pen drawing, and that with a water-color. After this he often makes a preliminary sketch in oil before assailing the picture itself. When his picture is sold he disposes of the sketches and studies. The result is that every work he gives out is at least in duplicate, and he obtains handsome prices for everything he has made in connection with it.

\* \* \*

A MUCH more convenient “mahl-stick” than that which is held in the hand is a light strip of smooth wood, one end of which rests on the floor and the other on the top of the easel. Your arm ought, however, to be its own “mahl-stick.” If your nerves are not steady enough to control your brush without a rest they need toning up. Apropos of the “mahl-stick,” it does not yet seem to have struck any one what a ridiculous combination of words that term is. “Mahl” is a pure German word, and means “paint;” “stick” is English. The term used

ought to be the original German one, "mahlstock," or its full English equivalent—paint stick. The quite prevalent word "maulstick," having no meaning at all, is more foolish even than the other.

\* \* \*

NEXT to a sensible criticism from an expert, a looking-glass is as good a critic as you can have while at work. The defects in tone, color, drawing, and balance of composition a reversed view of your picture will reveal to you, must be learned by experiment to be credited.

\* \* \*

THERE is no better muscular exercise for a painter than fencing. The practice gives the wrist a wonderful strength and suppleness, and the exercise of the rest of the body is an admirable tonic for a system necessarily somewhat enervated by close mental and physical indoor application.

\* \* \*

SMOKE painted against a light sky has always a warm tendency of color: against deep shade it is cold. All the great landscape painters give us russet smoke when warm light is seen behind it and blue smoke against shadow. The system is absolutely correct, as a very slight examination of nature will demonstrate, but it is not new. It is alluded to by as ancient an authority as Aristotle.

\* \* \*

YOUR easel should be as firm and substantial as you can command. No matter how heavy it is, a good set of rollers will easily make it controllable. The light and flimsy easels you can buy for a dollar or so are useful as makeshifts, but not when better ones are procurable. An incautious touch or pressure will tumble a light easel over, and it is always likely to be shaken while you are at work. A very convenient kind of easel is that with a couple of drawers in which you can keep your tubes of color, knives, rags and the rest, all ready to hand.

\* \* \*

ON the subject of the colors used by the modern artist, George C. Lambdin observes: "We have an immense number of pigments, tints of every sort, nine tenths of which should be excluded from the palette of every conscientious worker. Among the pigments prepared by the modern colormen many of the most attractive are utterly untrustworthy. There are, for instance, three colors which it seems almost impossible to dispense with—chrome yellow, carmine and Prussian blue. Samples of these, hung in a strong light, will, within a year, completely lose their essential properties, turning green and black. We have a good supply of yellows of every shade, some of them quite durable; we are pretty well furnished with blues, but good reds are very few. The reds of iron are too dull, the madder preparations are too weak, vermilion is excellent in its place, but there is absolutely no true red of good body and quite durable. If the painter had a perfect yellow, a perfect red and a perfect blue, tints which completely corresponded with nature's colors, he would need no more. But he cannot get them, and the best he can do under the circumstances is stick to a simple palette and keep it clean."

\* \* \*

A STUDENT recently returned from Munich says: "When I went abroad, fresh from the Art Students' League, I had the reputation of being a good draughtsman and a fair painter in the sketch class. When I entered the school in Munich I found that I knew nothing. Instead of making crayon drawings from the model on a sheet of charcoal paper I was called on to do them life-size; instead of little sketches, I had to paint my models six feet high, and not being exactly a six-footer myself had to mount a box to paint the heads. I had, moreover, to finish work on this scale in the same time that I had been accustomed to give a small drawing or study. At first I was in despair. At the end of the first week I seriously thought of throwing it all up and coming home. At the end of the month I was sick and disgusted with myself; at the end of the second month I had become interested, and by the commencement of my second quarter I wished my life would last forever. I acquired the power of working on a large scale slowly, for my eye had become used to seeing things too small, but while I advanced in it, I was amazed to see how strong and ready my hand became at small work, sketches and drawings from life and memory and compositions. It is a great school, that of big work. Now that I have been through it I wonder, sometimes, how I got as far as I did before I found it out."

ARTIST.

## Amateur Photography.

CONDUCTED BY GEORGE G. ROCKWOOD.

### OUT-OF-DOOR PORTRAITURE.

W. P. A. asks: "Why do I not get a good portrait with instantaneous exposure out-of-doors, or, say, on a piazza?" This inquiry covers almost every exigency in photography. Portraiture requires more favorable surroundings and adjuncts than any other branch of the art. The camera, of course, records what is before it. If the lights are too much diffused, or too much concentrated, and the pose not skilful, the unfailing instrument will so present it. Therefore, as pictures taken *al fresco* are ordinarily in lights and under conditions beyond control, portraiture under such conditions can rarely be successful. In landscape photography, and in composition pictures, figures may be introduced with good effect, but purely as accessory. When such figures look as if they were intended for portraits, an artistic effect is almost always lacking. Many, in other respects, good compositions which I have seen have been spoiled by the conscious attitudes of persons in the foreground evidently posing for their portraits, and looking at the instrument. In the fine compositions of Robinson and Sutcliffe, of England, faces are rarely turned toward the beholder, and while life and animation are given by the presence of figures, the idea of portraiture is not considered.

For successful portraiture out-of-doors, especially on piazzas, a suitable plain background should be provided against which the figures may be properly relieved without the spotty effect produced by foliage and other distant objects. The light should also be so cut off or controlled as to come from one source only. The side opposite to the source of light should also be covered with drapery in order to prevent reflections. With due care a fair skylight effect may be produced in such a place. In the field, I question very much whether successful portraits may be made other than as accessory to compositions or pictures. Possibly our correspondent may refer to technical difficulties, such as flatness, or, the reverse, spottiness.

It is still difficult for the photographer to realize the rapid action on the gelatine plate, and therefore nine out of ten pictures are overtimed. The overtiming asserts itself by a quick flashing up of the image when developed, and a flat, tame print. The remedy, of course, is to employ smaller diaphragms or have shorter exposures. In all out-of-door work the bromide of potassium solution should be ready for instant use in case the picture comes up too rapidly in the early development. It is the safest plan *always* to start a plate with a developer in combination with a retarding solution. If the exposure has been too long there will be time to save the plate. If the exposure has been correct, the plate may be taken out, washed, and placed in the normal developer, and brought out in the usual manner.

If, on the other hand, the picture has been under-timed, a fresh, soft developer should be used. If it cannot be brought out by this means, there will be strong contrasts of black and white, and great want of detail both in the lights and the shadows. What should be half tints will be white spots, and shadows which ought to be full of detail, will be inkly black. Again, should all the accessories of the photographer be favorable, an exposure under such circumstances would not be "instantaneous." In all portraiture I find it desirable to work slower plates, or in some way increase the time of exposure that there may be some latitude for working.

It is much more difficult even under portrait skylights, where everything is favorable, to get uniform results when plates require but *one* second exposure, than when there is a margin of two or three seconds. The human mind and the human hand are not sufficiently on the alert to discriminate in regard to parts of a second; if one second of time is the correct exposure, it requires but a small fraction of a second, plus or minus, to quite undo the result.

THOROUGHNESS.—As there is no royal road to art, so there is no "short cut" to excellence in photography. Uniform painstaking are the only means of securing good results. Persons in trouble come to me for guidance when it is evident that their difficulties come solely from want of painstaking. When their little omissions or commissions are pointed out the general apology is that they "thought it would not matter." It should be an unvarying rule to attend with scrupulous care to every little detail, assuming, at the outset, that everything *may* be wrong and work-

ing with the determination to overcome every fault of camera, plate-holder, lens, etc. It might be said that excessive care means slow work. It means just the reverse. Care adds to certainty, and certainty means speed.

MEASLES.—Another correspondent sends prints made on "Ponsé" paper, which show a malignant form of "measles." After a number of experiments, I have concluded that it is occasioned by using a liquid lubricator on the prints. The tint of the paper is imparted, unquestionably, by some form of aniline. This is soluble in alcohol; so, when the liquid lubricator, which is of alcohol, is applied, it dissolves a portion of the color. The remedy is apparent; use a *dry* lubricator.

HYPO STAINS.—Many of the negatives amateurs bring to me to be printed have ugly stains and markings which are strong tell-tales of negligence in minor details. Unfortunately, the impression exists that it is not necessary to wash the hypo thoroughly after fixing, because the alum is a perfect eliminator. The latter statement is true; but the compound formed by alum and hypo is not always a harmless one. Mr. Burton, the eminent English photographer, has recently written some exhaustive articles upon this subject, demonstrating plainly that this combination at times becomes an insoluble compound and the source of deterioration in the negative. The editor of The British Journal claims that a trace of hypo is not "the true enemy that we have to fight," but it is an unstable compound formed with it that is the cause of destruction both of negatives and of prints. Without going into the chemical question, it is safe to assume with the writer that, "given a print or a negative fresh from the fixing bath, and containing in its substance sodium and silver hyposulphites, the application of alum solutions will bring about the same changes. The reaction may be so gradual, especially in a film of gelatine, that no immediate alteration in the appearance of either negative or print is visible, and if carefully and thoroughly washed, *at once*, the formation of deleterious matter may be prevented; but it would be scarcely reasonable to suppose that the application of alum under such circumstances, though it decomposes the hypo, converts it into harmless substances, or adds to the chances of permanence of the image. Rather, we should imagine, it adds to the chance of danger, for while an equally careful washing is needful in order to remove the soluble silver salts, the film, be it gelatine or albumen, contains within itself the elements of *rapid* change, and in the case of imperfect washing is even more liable to deterioration than if the alum had not been applied." As Mr. Burton very justly points out, and as others have done before, it is not the hypo, as such, that gives rise to the troubles usually charged to it, but the soluble silver compounds formed in fixing, and these can only be removed by careful washing. If by any course of treatment they should be transformed into insoluble compounds in the film itself, they can scarcely fail to prove detrimental; hence, we urge that the "elimination" of the hypo by means of alum, if resorted to as a substitute for washing, is detrimental rather than otherwise.

In spite of the existence of a large number of amateur photographic societies in England, it would seem that formulas and methods of working are unwillingly given by the professionals. At the foot of the Rigi on Lake Lucerne, I met an English amateur, admirably equipped with apparatus and about to take a picture. Feeling interested in his work, I made his acquaintance, and in the course of the morning gave him many practical suggestions as to choice of views, selection of time, light, and other matters. He finally asked: "Do photographers in America usually impart information to amateurs as freely as you have done to me?" I expressed the opinion that we depend a little more, in our country, upon our brains and skill than on locked-up formulas; that all practical information was freely imparted, at any rate by many of our professional photographers. "Well," said he, "it would be impossible to get such information from an English professional, without a large corkscrew and a guinea concealed in the handle!"

MANY amateurs bring their negatives to me for criticism. The common art fault is the failure to carry the development far enough. Shadows should be thoroughly brought out and the high lights given sufficient density to secure good results. The fixing bath, almost invariably reduces somewhat the strength of the negative, sometimes entailing a severe tax upon the eyesight in the dim light of the developing room. But I can see no objection to increasing the light after the image is well brought up. It is a good plan to have your lantern so arranged that one sheet of the yellow paper or one thickness of the colored glass can be removed at pleasure.

IN PHOTOGRAPHING AN INTERIOR, "if a light comes within range of the lens, you will have an opportunity to display your tact, since the negative would be ruined unless something were done to diminish the glare of light. You may be able to blanket up the intrusive window, excluding every particle of light and then get illumination from an adjoining window, or through doorways from other lighted apartments. If you have patience you will then take a small wall mirror, and, keeping it in motion, cast its reflection into the dim parts of the room during the period of exposure. In the mean while, you may have sheets hung so that they will reflect light while themselves not within range. If the light is too strong in any one part of the room, the corresponding part of the negative will be "cooked" before the other parts are, perhaps, half done, and the result will be unsatisfactory. The easiest way to photograph an interior, is, of course, to photograph *from* the side at which the light enters, or across the angle of light. After the general interior has had sufficient exposure, it is sometimes feasible to remove the coverings from the windows (after carefully replacing the cap on the instrument) and to then give the whole one second, or more, exposure according to the strength of the light at the windows. In such a case the light should be so arranged that strong streams of light and lines of shadow do not produce an unpleasant effect on the floor or elsewhere." [ALEXANDER BLACK.]